THE PEBBLE AND THE ACORN.

"I am a pebble, and yield to none!"
Were the swelling words of a tiny stone;
"Nor time nor seasons can alter me;
I am abiding while ages flee.
The pelting hail and the drizzling rain
Have tried to soften me long in vain;
And the tender dew has sought to melt,
Or touch my heart, but it was not felt.

"There's none that can tell about my birth,
For I'm as old as the big, round earth.
The children of men arise and pass
Out of the world, like blades of grass,
And many a foot on me has trod,
That's gone from sight and under the sod.
I am a pebble, but who art thou,
Rattling along from the restless bough?"

The Acorn was shocked at this rude salute,
And lay for a moment abashed and mute.
She never before had been so near
This gravelly ball, the mundane sphere;
And she felt, for a time, at a loss to know
How to answer a thing so coarse and low.

But to give reproof of a nobler sort
Than the angry look, or keen retort,
At length she said, in gentle tone;
"Since it has happened that I am thrown
From the lighter element where I grew,
Down to another, so hard and new,
And beside a personage so august,
Abashed, I will cover my head in dust,
And quickly retire from the sight of one
Whom time nor season, nor storm nor sun,
Nor the gentle dew, nor the grinding heel,
Has ever subdued, or made to feel."
And soon, in the earth she sank away
From the comfortles spot where the pebble lay.
From the comfortless spot where the pebble lay.

But it was not long ere the soil was broke
By the peering head of an infant oak;
And as it arose and its branches spread,
The Pebble looked up, and, wondering said,
"A modest acorn, never to tell
What was inclosed in its simple shell;
That the pride of the forest was folded up
In the narrow space of its little cup,
And meekly to sink in the darksome earth,
Which proves that nothing could hide its worth.

"And oh, how many will tread on me,
To come and admire the beautiful tree,
Whose head is towering toward the sky,
Above such a worthless thing as I.
Useless and vain, a cumberer here,
I have been idling from year to year;
But never from this shall a vaunting word
From the humble pebble again be heard,
Till something, without me or within,
Shall show the purpose for which I have been."
The pebble its vow could not forget,
And it lies there wrapped in silence yet.
—Anonymous.

THE RUNAWAY.

"Would they put her in the asylum," she wondered, "if they caught her?"

Folks would surely think she was crazy.

She stopped at the stone wall to rest, and looked back timorously at the old familiar scene.

Far behind her stretched the meadows, a symphony of olive and green in the late Fall. Here and there the sunken boulder stood soldiery golden rod, or berry bushes clothed now in scarlet and gold. At intervals in the long slope stood solitary trees, where fluttering, brittle leaves fell in the gentle chill air. In Summer time she remembered well the haymakers rested in the shade, and the jug with ginger water she made for the men was kept there to be cool.

She seemed, as she sat there, to remember everything. The house was all right, she was sure of that, the key was under the kitchen door mat, the fire was out in the stove, and the cat locked in the barn.

She held her work-hardened hand to her side, panting a little, for it was a good bit of a walk across the meadow, and she was eighty years old on her last birthday. The cows feeding looked homelike and pleasant.

"Good-bye, critters," she said, aloud; "meny's the time I've druv' ye home an' milked ye, an I allus let ye eat by the way, nor never hurried ye as the boys done."

With a farewell glance she went on again, smoothing as she walked the scattered locks of gray hair falling under the hood, and keeping her scant black gown out of the reach of briars. Across another field, then through a leafy lane where the wood was hauled in Winter, then out through a gap in a stump fence, with its great branching arms like a petrified octopus, to the dusty high road.

Not a soul in sight in the coming twilight. John, the children and the scolding wife, who made her so unhappy, would not be home for an hour yet, for East Mills was a long drive.

Down the steep hill went the brave little figure, followed by an odd shadow of itself in the waning light, and by the tiny stones that rolled so swiftly they passed her often and made her look behind with a start to see if a pursuer were coming.

"They'd put me in the asylum sure," she muttered, wildly, as she trudged along. At the foot of the hill she sat down upon an old log and waited for the train.

Across the road, guarded by a big sign, "Lookout for the engine," ran two parallel iron rails, which were to be her road when the big monster should come panting around the curve.

At last the dull rumble sounded, a shrill whistle, and she hurried to the track, waving her shawl to signal.

This, in the conductor's vernacular, was a crossroads station, where he was used to watch for people waving articles frantically. The train stopped, and the passenger was taken aboard. He noticed she was a bright-eyed old lady, very neat and precise.

"How fur?"

"Boston."

"Git there in the morning," he said, kindly, waiting for the money, as she opened a queer little reticule, where, under her knitting, wrapped in a clean cotton handkerchief, was her purse with her savings of long years—the little sums Sam had sent her when he first began to prosper in the West, and some money she had earned herself by knitting and berry-picking.

At a cross road, as they went swiftly on, she saw the old sorrel horse, the rattling wagon, and John with his family, driving homeward. She drew back with a little cry, fearing he might see her and stop the train, but they went on so fast that could not be, and the old horse jogged into the woods, and John never thought his old Aunt Hannah, his charge for twenty long years, was running away.

At Boston a kindly conductor bought her a through ticket for Denver.

"It's a long journey for an old lady like you," he said.

"But I'm peart for my age," she said, anxiously; "I never hed a day's sickness since I was a gal."

"Going all the way alone?"

"With Providence," she answered, brightly, alert and eager to help herself, but silent and thoughtful as the train took her into strange landscape where the miles went so swiftly it seemed like the past years of her life as she looked back on them.

"Thy works are marvelous," she murmured often, sitting with her hands folded and few idle days had there been in her world where she had sat and rested so long.

In the day coach the people were kind and generous, sharing their baskets with her and seeing she changed cars right and her carpet-bag was safe. She was like any of the dear old grandmas in Eastern homes, or to the grizzled men and women, like the memory of our dead mothers as faint and as far away as the scent of wild roses in a hillside country burying-ground. She tended babies for tired women and talked to the men of farming and crops, or told the children Bible stories; but never a word she said of herself, not one.

On again, guided by kindly hands through the great bewildering city by the lake, and now through yet a stranger land. Tired and worn by night in the uncomfortable seats, her brave spirit began to fail a little. As the wide, level plains, lonely and drear, dawned on her sight she sighed often.

"It's a dre'ful big world," she said to a gray-bearded old farmer near her; "so big I feel e'ermost lost in it, but," hopefully, "across them deserts like this long ago Providence sent a star to guide them wise men to the East, an' I hain't lost my faith."

But as the day wore on, and still the long monotonous land showed no human habitation, no oasis of green, her eyes dimmed, something like a sob rose under the black kerchief on the bowed shoulders, and the spectacles were taken off with trembling hand and put away carefully in the worn tin case.

"Be ye goin' fur, mother?" said the old farmer.

He had bought her a cup of coffee at the last station and had pointed out on the way things he thought might interest her.

"To Denver."

"Wal, wal; you're from New England, I'll be bound."

"From Maine," she answered; and then she grew communicative, for she was always a chatty old lady, and she had possessed her soul in silence so long and it was a relief to tell the story of her weary years of waiting to a kindly listener.

She told him all the relations she had were two grand-nephews and their families. That twenty years ago Sam (for she had brought them up when their parents died of consumption; that takes so many of our folks) went out West. He was always adventurous, and for ten years, she did not hear from him; but John was different and steady, and when he came of age she had given him her farm, with the provision that she should always have a home, otherwise he would have gone away, too. Well, for five years they were happy, then John married, and his wife had grown to think her a burden as the years went on, and the children, when they grew big, did not care for her; she felt that she had lived too long.

"I growed so lonesome," she said, pathetically, "it seems I couldn't take up heart to live day by dey, an' yit I knowed our folks was long-lived. Ten years back, when Sam wrote he was doin' fair an' sent me money, I began to think of him; fur he was allus generous an' kind, an' the gratefulest boy, an' so I began to save to go to him, fur I knowed I could work my board for a good many years to come. Fur three years he ain't hardly wrote, but I laid that to the wild kentry he lived in. I said bears and Inuns don't skeer me none, fur when I was a gal up in Aroostuk kentry there was plenty of both, an' as fur buffalers, them horned cattle don't skeer me none, fur I've been used to a farm allus. But the lonesomeness of these medders has sorter upsot me and made me think every day Sam was further off than I ever calc'lated on."

"But what will you do if Sam ain't in Denver?" asked the farmer.

"I hev put my faith in Providence," she answered simply, and the stranger could not mar that trust by any word of warning.

He gave her his address as he got off at the Nebraska line, and told her to send him word if she needed help. With a warm hand-clasp he parted from her to join the phantoms in her memory of "folks that had been kind to her, God bless me," and then the train was rumbling on.

But many of the passengers had listened to her story and were interested, and they came to sit with her.

One pale little lad in the seat in front turned to look at her now and then and to answer her smile. He was going to the new country for health and wealth, poor lad, only to find eternal rest in the sunny land, but his last days brightened by the reward for his thoughtful act and kindness.

"She probably brought those boys up," he thought, "and denied her life for them. Is she to die unrewarded, I wonder? There cannot be any good in the world if that be so." He thought of her and took out his purse; there was so little money in it, too, every cent made a big hole in his store; but the consciousness of a good deed was worth something. "I mayn't have the chance to do many more," thought the lad, buttoning his worn overcoat.

He slipped off without a word at a station and sent a telegram to Denver.

"To Samuel Blair"—for he had caught the name from her talk—"Your Aunt Hannah Blair is on the W. and W. train coming to you."

It was only a straw, but a kindly wind might blow it to the right one after all. When he was sitting there after his message had gone on its way, she leaned over and handed him a peppermint drop from a package in her pocket.

"You don't look strong, dearie," she said; "ain't ye no folks with ye?"

"None on earth."

"We're both lone ones," she smiled, "an' how sad it be there ain't no one to fuss over ye. An' be keerful of the drafts, and keep flannels allus on your chist; that is good fur the lungs."

"You are very kind to take an interest in me," he smiled; "but I am afraid it is too late."

Another night of weary slumber in the cramped seats and then the plain began to be dotted with villages, and soon appeared the straggling outskirts of a city, the smoke of mills, the gleam of the Platte River, and a net work of iron rails, bright and shining, as the train ran shrieking into the labyrinth of its destination.

"This is Denver," said the lad to her, "and I'll look after you as well as I can."

"I won't be no burden," she said, brightly. "I've twenty dollars yet, an' that's a sight of money."

The train halted to let the east-ward-bound express pass, there was an air of excitement in the car, passengers getting ready to depart, gathering up luggage and wraps, and some watching the newcomers and the rows of strange faces on the outward bound.

The door of the car slammed suddenly, and a big-bearded man with eager blue eyes came down the aisle, looking sharply from right to left. He had left Denver on the express to meet this train. His glance fell on the tiny black figure.

"Why, Aunt Hannah!" he cried, with a break in his voice, and she—she put out her trembling hand and fell into the big arms, tears streaming down the wrinkled face.

"I knowed Providence would let me find ye, Sam," she said, brokenly, and no one smiled when the big man sat down beside her and with gentle hand wiped her tears away.

"Why, I've sent John $20 a month for five years for you," he said, angrily, as she told him why she ran away, "and he said you could not write, for you had a stroke, and was helpless, and I have written often and sent you money. It's hard for a man to call his own brother a villian."

"We won't, Sam," she said, gently, "but just forgit; and I would'nt be a burden for ye, fur I can work yit, an' for years to come."

"Work indeed! don't I owe you erything?" he cried. "And my wife has longed for you to come. There are so few dear old aunts in this country, they're prized, I tell you. Why, it's as good as a royal coat-of-arms to have a dear, handsome old woman like you for a relative."

Then he found out who sent the telegram and paid the lad, who blushed and stammered like a girl, and did not want to take it.

"I suppose you want a job?" said the big man. "Well, I can give you one. I'm in the food commission business. Give you something light? Lots of your sort, poor lads, out here. All the reference I want is that little kindness of yours to Aunt Hannah."

"Here's the depot, Aunt Hannah, and you won't see 'bars and injuns,' nor the buffaloes; sunniest city you ever set your dear eyes on."

He picked up the carpet bag, faded and old-fashioned, not a bit ashamed of it, though it looked as if Noah might have carried it to the ark.

They said good-bye, and the last seen of her was her happy old face beaming from a carriage window as she rolled away to what all knew would be a pleasant home for all her waning years.—The Standard.

FRENCH FORESTRY.

How Trees in France Are Never Allowed to Vanish.

France has given to the world many valuable lessons in forestry, especially in the reclamation of sand dunes and marshes by the Department of the Landes in the southwest and the high returns from the cultivation of pines there.

Comprising about 2,500,000 acres of what were barren sand dunes prior to 1803, this area has been reclaimed by forest planting until it has become one of the most productive and healthful regions of the republic. The subsoil drainage of the country has been effected by the roots of the trees, which penetrate the layer of clay that underlies the sand.

In addition to supplying timber this area supports a number of industries dependent on the cultivation of the pine, including the production of turpentine, resin, tar, pitch, charcoal and other products of similar nature.

In the system by which the forest is managed, the trees are divided into two classes—the "short life" trees and the "standing" trees. The former are tapped as soon as they are big enough to endure "bleeding"—that is to say, when about four or five inches in diameter. When they have been bled to death they are removed as "thinnings," the wood being used for pit props, for which the English demand guarantees a steady and profitable market. The second class, composed of the most vigorous individuals, are not tapped until they are from ten to fifteen inches in diameter. The age of these trees when they are felled is from fifty to sixty years. The timber is used for lumber poles and railway ties.

Of these forests, about 80 percent belongs to individuals, while from the 125,000 acres belonging to the Government there was obtained as revenue in 1905, $98,811, as against $640 in 1885, the first year in which any revenue was obtained at all.—Harper's Weekly.

Catch Trout in Orchards.

Game Warden Thomas Mullen of Yakima county has called the sportsmen of this district together to devise some way of protecting the game fish which are now being slaughtered in thousands by being dumped on the orchards and alfalfa fields from the irrigation ditches.

The trout and salmon enter the ditches and then turn off into the laterals, finally ending their life in the grass where the water has played out and left them. Attorney Edward Parker a few days ago caught a six pound rainbow trout in his pear orchard. Clinton Shannon found several trout in his orchard and numerous others have reported similar finds.

Small boys catch long strings of small trout by scooping them from the pools with their hands. Game Warden Mullen says that in some sections of the valley the ranchers who want fish angle for them in the irrigation ditches in preference to the streams, the ditches being more accessible and the water slower and therefore better.—North Yakima correspondence Seattle Post-Intelligencer.

Desertions from German Army.

"Desertions in the German army are almost unknown," said Major Wackwitz of Saxony, an officer in the Kaiser's army. "The discipline in the German army, as is well known, is perhaps the most rigorous of any in the world, but there is rarely a thought of deserting.

"This is due largely, I suppose, to the fact that service in the army of Germany is compulsory. It is part of every man's life, just as school education is. Boys are taught in school to obey, and in later life, when they enter the army, discipline is so instilled into their minds that there is never a thought of disobeying orders.

"Duelling, once so common in Germany, is now a thing of the past. One never hears of the code of honor any more."—Washington Post.

STOPPED THE NORTH CLOCK.

Winter Was Too Much for One of the Four in a Court House Tower.

"While I was out in Iowa not long ago," said a traveling man, "I saw what struck me as a very unusual proof of the disadvantage of a northern exposure.

"I was staying a day or two in Clinton, a town in the eastern part of the state, and I had occasion more than once to take the trolley car which passed the court house. The building has a large central tower with a clock face on each side.

"I have a sort of fondness for public clocks in general and for the big friendly faces which shine from clock towers in particular. So as we approached the court house from the south I looked up and noted the time. I even took out my watch and compared the two. It was about half past 10.

"It was about an hour later when I came back, and again I glanced up at the clock, this time at the one facing the north. To my surprise it indicated a quarter of 7.

"I couldn't see how that could be. Even if the clock had stopped since I had passed an hour before it could no way have got around to a quarter of 7.

"I was so puzzled that I kept my eyes on the tower as we spun along past the court house. That brought us past its eastern side, and to my amazement that clock pointed cheerfully to 11.27, the time it really was. When we got further along, so that I could see the south clock, I found that it, too, was stoll doing business.

"I couldn't make it out, so I stepped out on the front platfom and put it up to the motorman, for I had an idea that he would keep pretty good track of that clock's doings. He knew all about it.

"It seems that the north clock has to take the brunt of all the icy blasts without ever a gleam of warm sun to thaw her out, and she just naturally lies down under the strain once in a while. He said that once in a great while the east or the west side would come in for such harsh treatment at the hands of the weather that it would take to welching, but that the south clock was always as chipper as a cricket in the warmest corner of the hearth.

"The north clock, so he figured, got kind of stiff and numb, just as he did himself when he was going into the teeth of the north wind.

"'And, gee,' he said, 'if her hands get as stiff as mine do I don't blame her for quittin'. I'd do it too if I had to run north all the while.'"—New York Sun.

A Bible of 1544.

D. W. Dietrich, a school teacher of Warwick township, Lancaster county, has a German bible that was printed partly in 1544 and partly in 1551 by Christofel Fraushaur, in Zurish, Switzerland. The volume is fully illustrated and is in excellent condition. What seems remarkable is the fact that it has marginal references. It measures 15 inches in length, 11 in width and is six inches thick. The book is bound in heavy calfskin, almost half an inch thick. The back is heavily ribbed and studded with copper rivets. The corners are protected by heavy metal plates, and the book closes with a heavy metal clasp. The book is not paged though the leaves are numbered. A marginal record states that Christopher Burkholder bought the volume in 1771 for 30 shillings (about $7.50). It came into the Dietrich family in 1835, when the father of the present owner bought it at a public sale for 65 cents.—Philadelphia Record.

Taxi Cabs

"Hansometer" is clearly too long a name for London's new horse cabs, and perhaps, as "taxi" has been anticipated by the motor cabs, "tizzy" might do, in allusion to the sixpenny fare. The cabmen themselves may have something to say in the matter. They are great name givers, their most memorable achievement probably being "joey" for four-penny piece. It was so called in honor, or dishonor, of Joseph Hume, the champion of economy, who had a great deal to do with the introduction of the coin, which came in handily for short cab fares, where sixpence might otherwise have been given without a demand for change.

Naturally it was not at all popular with the cabmen.—London Chronicle.

Revolving Cylinder Motor.

A new motor is now made in which the cylinders form the flywheel and revolve around the shaft. This dispenses with the heavy weight of the flywheel and the material used in making the long crank shaft, crank bearings and bearings. It has a [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] like a [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] by [illegible] force as well as closing the valves without springs and forcing the [illegible] last part of the mixture in the ends of the cylinders. No fan or other method is used for cooling, as the rapidity with which the cylinders revolve throws off the hot air.—Popular Mechanics.